

# STB News

June 2003

## ROBINSON CHOSEN AS STB CHIEF OF STAFF

Melissa Robinson has been chosen as the new chief of staff for the Science and Technology Base Programs (STB) Office.

Allen Hartford, STB division leader, announced her selection on Thursday, June 26, saying, in his announcement, "Melissa brings a wealth of experience to STB, most recently as BUS-2 (Distributed Financial Services), group leader. Her experience in leading this organization, which provided support across the Laboratory, has given her a broad perspective that will be valuable in helping STB to carry out its responsibilities and in serving the needs of the people in STB. She has also been a Business Team Leader in a large and complex organization, the former ESH (Environmental, Safety and Health) Division, and is active in the LANL (Los Alamos National Laboratory) Foundation."

Robinson will join the Program Office July 21, but, in a recent interview, she said that she hopes to meet with many team leaders and employees before her formal arrival.

Once she arrives, she will be located in Room 101 in the STB Program Office.



**Melissa Robinson**

"I'm really excited to be here," she said, commenting that she has already talked extensively with Hartford.

Robinson is a northern New Mexico native who has been at LANL for 19 and a half years.

She was born in Española, and she graduated from McCurdy High School. She was the first person in her family to go to college, but, she said, "I always knew I wanted to go to college, and my family really pushed me to go."

Her first degree was a bachelor's in business administration from the University of New Mexico (UNM) in Albuquerque. While at UNM, she began working as an undergraduate student in the Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES) Division.

She's a family person, and she knew she wanted to come home to find work.

The Laboratory had the most promising opportunities.

Her first job at the Laboratory after graduation was as an administrative secretary in X Division. From that position, she moved on to what was then the Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) Division, becoming an administrative clerk working with radioactive material shipments.

It was in HSE that she was trained to do budget, became a budget analyst, and moved on to financial management in the HSE Division Office.

"HSE reorganized several times," she recalled. After one of those reorganizations, she moved up to senior analyst, doing all radiation protection budgets. When the division reorganized again and became ESH Division, she became "acting business team leader for just the financial side." Eventually, Denny Erickson, ESH division leader at the time, promoted her to business team leader for all business functions including procurement and property. He also assigned her other tasks including consolidating project management and handling

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## **Robinson (Continued from Page One)**

issues management.

"I stayed there for a long time," about 10 years, she said. She got involved in things such as re-engineering, doing strategic planning, and developing an ESH Management Plan for the Laboratory that was required by the Department of Energy.

ESH "gave me opportunities to go back to school," she added. "I've always been a BUS employee, but it was ESH that paid for my master's degrees." She earned a master's degree in organizational management from the University of Phoenix in Albuquerque and a master's degree in business administration from the executive MBA program at UNM. She also holds a master's certificate in project management from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

About two years ago, she became BUS-2 group leader. All of the defense and threat reduction financial, property, and procurement employees reported to her.

When Tom Palmieri came in as the new chief financial officer, another reorganization took place. She emerged again as head of BUS-2, which handled distributed financial services. She supervised approximately 150 people in the group. She was very involved in recruiting, hiring, and staffing, she said. Essentially, her job was "personnel driven."

In November 2002, she began a stint as business program manager for Thomas J. Mayer in the Strategic Research Directorate, but then challenges arose in BUS, and she was called back to BUS-2.

So why did she apply for the post as STB chief of staff?

"I was interested in coming back to a job more like ESH, where I was involved in real projects" instead of just personnel, she said. She was seeking variety, and she needed a break from the pressures of personnel-related work.

There's another aspect to Robinson's life at the Laboratory. She is very involved in the LANL Employees' Scholarship Fund. She began working with the project when it began, five years ago. She is now co-chairman of the Advisory Board. She said she often visits schools, and she helps with selection and job placement for students. "I just kind of help with everything," she said. "That keeps me very, very busy." She also believes in making herself available to the students. They have her home phone number as well as her office number.

She also participates in the Lunch Buddies program.

And then there's family.

Her husband, John Robinson, works for New Mexico Social Services in Santa Fe. They have one son, Aaron, 13, who is a student at Los Alamos Middle School.

The Robinsons moved to White Rock about a year and a half ago because her son is so involved in activities that commuting from the Valley was becoming a heavy load.

Aaron is involved in a competitive soccer team, and in an average week, his mom leaves home on Friday, goes to Albuquerque for soccer, and doesn't come home until Sunday.

She also spends considerable time with her mother, Betty Norris, and her two aunts and one great aunt in the Valley. "I go and visit them a lot," she said. "I'm very close to my family."

On June 26, Hartford took Robinson to a number of STB offices to meet the people who will be her new colleagues. She seemed to enjoy getting to know them.

"I *knew* the 150 people in my old group," she said. She wants that to be true in STB as well.

## **We Have a New Look**

This is the first STB News that is more than two pages long, the first with photographs, and the first produced in Word and OSX.

We owe our thanks to Stephen Schultz, Rick Alexander, and Elena Perez. All of them helped with various aspects of photography and composition.

The photos and copy are by Charmian Schaller, STB News editor. Remember, if you have suggestions for stories, please call her at 5-3895.



**STB-University of California held a birthday party June 26 for Deborah Wilke, left. STB News caught her with her eyes closed. Perhaps she was "making a wish." Antonya Jandacek, right, is a graduate research assistant working in STB-UC this summer.**

# STB News 2

## STB WORKERS HELP WITH SUMMER FUN

### Min Park Helps to Create New Laboratory Festival

Los Alamos National Laboratory will celebrate its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year with a “Laboratory Family Festival.”

The festival will be something new—a gift of fun and good food that the Laboratory is giving to its people.

Min Park, who works in educational outreach for STB’s Education Program Office, has been a member of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee since it was founded last December and has worked hard to help find ways for Laboratory employees to celebrate their heritage and their successes.

In a recent all-hands message, Interim Laboratory Director Pete Nanos summarized this most-recent plan. “The intent of the festival,” he said, “is to salute all members of the extended Laboratory workforce ‘family’—past and present—for their many contributions to this great institution....”

The festival is scheduled on Saturday, July 19, at Sullivan Field in Los Alamos, from approximately 10 a.m. to about 5 p.m. All present and past Laboratory employees—both University of California employees and contractors in every category—are invited to come and bring their families. Please help the planners by registering in advance at <http://sixty.lanl.gov/festival/registration.php>.

Park envisions a celebration that will feature food, music, dancing, games—fun for all ages.

Park has wide-ranging interests. He holds a Ph.D. in molecular biology and is a staff member in the Bioscience Division (the Langham Resource, B-2), but in the last nine months, he has also facilitated the formation of the Northern New Mexico Education Technology Consortium and has worked hard for the success of the Math and Science Academy.

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### *Landry Has Long Experience with Kiwanis Fourth of July*

It’s a time-honored tradition—and Sandra Landry, a team leader in STB’s Education Program Office—has been one of the people at the heart of it for years.

Every Fourth of July in Los Alamos County, about 8,000 people pack onto the soccer field in Overlook Park in White Rock for an afternoon of friends, food, and fun, followed by a fabulous fireworks show.

Anyone can come.

The suggested donation this year is \$12 for a carload of people or \$3 for an individual. You just walk or drive into the park, put down a blanket or set up chairs and a table, and have fun.

The activities begin at 3 p.m. This year, they will include performances by several different musical groups, booths offering many different kinds of food, and an inflatable jumping gym.

By 8 p.m., the field will be like a village green, filled with happy adults and delighted children.

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### Joe Liberty: Art in New York to Websites at the Laboratory

Joe Liberty, the new webmeister in the Research Library, has a background involving several states and a series of related interests.

He is originally from Virginia, and he earned a degree in fine art from Virginia Commonwealth University. After graduation, he moved to Manhattan and worked in the New York art world for 12 years.

But then, as a graduate student, he began taking computer graphics classes at Pratt Institute. The next step was a job in Austin, Texas, where he programmed children’s educational CDs.

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## **Liberty (Continued from Page 3)**

That experience led to a job at Human Code Multimedia Co.

He moved to Santa Fe, working remotely for Human Code for three years before joining the Laboratory in October.

Now he is working on a new interface for the “My Library” project. He said his Research Library job is “great” because it involves the same type of work he has done in the past but also allows him to use “the latest software and resources.”

He said computers also dominate his spare time, but he is hoping now to get out more with his two daughters, ages 5 and 7.

## **Landry (Continued from Page 3)**

A few brief speeches, the “Star-Spangled Banner,” and a prayer are scheduled between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. (Interim Laboratory Director Pete Nanos was invited to speak this year, but he will be out of town.)

And then, right at 9 p.m., the fireworks will start. They usually last about an hour.

Landry explained that it all started years ago with a show put on by the Elks each year at Los Alamos Middle School.

Eventually, the Los Alamos Kiwanis Club (a Lab-sanctioned organization) took on the job and moved the show to Overlook Park, where there was a larger, flatter field.

Now Kiwanis works with the county staff to make the fireworks a reality each year. The county provides the field, police assistance, cleanup, and—most important of all—support from the fire department to make sure that the show is safe for everyone. Kiwanis, in turn, provides planning and arrangements, hundreds of hours of manpower, and funding for the fireworks themselves. The county says the show provides a safe alternative to private fireworks. Kiwanians see the show as public service.

This year, the Kiwanis share of the event comes to \$20,000. In addition, Landry noted, because of the security concerns that have arisen in the wake of 9/11, the club had to arrange for special clearances for many of its people, and it had to buy a fireproof shed in which to store the fireworks. The result: The club is now trying to raise \$5,000 from businesses and local donors to cover the additional cost.

Landry, who has been a Kiwanian for seven years and served as president two years ago, finds the organization’s mission to help children

and build community a true inspiration, and she supports it with constant hard work.

She and her husband, Don, also a Laboratory employee, have been co-chairmen of show several times—and they are again this year.

The members of the Fourth of July Committee started work in February this year, she said. They have raised money; planned and arranged for entertainment, activities, and food; registered vendors; taken care of the increasingly complex details involved in buying and preparing fireworks; prepared for the club’s own barbecue stand; and handled publicity. In all, they have held 10 meetings, and there will be several more before July 4 arrives.

Sandra and Don won’t have to attend the “squiribbing party,” when Kiwanians insert fuses to guarantee that each shell will go off as planned, and they won’t be on the firing line. But Sandra will be running the barbecue booth, and Don will be giving a speech—and making sure that everything on the field works as planned.

## **Min Park (Continued from Page 3)**

In recent days, 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary events have taken up a lot of his time. “I had to visualize everything,” he said, to make sure that major items would not be overlooked. Many people helped him a great deal, he added, and those working on the festival have now formed a logistics team, an entertainment team, and a communications team and are still working diligently. He is still looking for volunteers to serve food and assist with the game booths.

He noted that the festival will be “the last big event” in the long list of anniversary activities.

He’s planning for a day of hamburgers, hotdogs, watermelon—“classic summer fare”—at which Laboratory leaders and their employees will relax and have fun together. It’s intended as a “morale boost,” he said, and he added that it will be “the first time in the history of the Lab that we have had this huge event to appreciate people.” “I think people remember this type of activity for a long time,” he said. “I hope a lot of STB families come.”

He emphasized that you don’t have to be from Los Alamos or White Rock to attend. Laboratory employees, retirees, and family members from Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Española, the pueblos, and all other communities will be equally welcome. Park himself plans to be there with his wife, Monica, and his nine-year-old son, Jin.

“Come out and have fun,” he said. “Hope for sunshine—but bring an umbrella.”